XXXX XX, 2024

Dear XXX,

Michigan legislators must move quickly to adopt an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging Materials law so that our communities are no longer unfairly forced to shoulder the burden of managing those materials and paying for needed recycling programs. The responsibilities of recycling must be shared with the producers of the packaging, who are in the best position to reduce waste in the design process.

Michigan is far from reaching its goal of recycling 35% of our waste by 2029. I am an active recycler, yet my community is struggling to fund, manage, let alone grow robust and resilient recycling programs. The financial burden of managing greater volumes of diverse and challenging materials is only growing for me and my community. And, there is no indication that things will get better unless the Michigan legislature acts to extend producer responsibility through the entire lifecycle of the products and packaging that end up in recycling and waste carts every day.

Luckily an effective solution to our recycling problems is available. EPR for packaging is already effectively used across the world, including in Australia, Brazil, and Canada, all 28 countries in the EU, and Russia. These systems successfully shift costs of managing recycling from taxpayers to the producers and increase recycling rates to well over 50%.

EPR in Michigan will make recycling:

* More Effective:
  + Producers of packaging materials would have a direct economic incentive to produce packaging that can more easily be managed by municipal recycling programs.
  + My community would have an economic incentive to maintain its robust recycling program.
* More Sustainable: EPR is an insurance policy for Michigan municipalities and connects these programs directly to end markets for the recycled material. Our current approach to recycling is not resilient to changes in the global recycling market. Because my community must budget for recycling, when costs rise unexpectedly we may be forced to stop or restrict our programs.
* More Equitable: By internalizing the full lifecycle costs of products and packaging, we are assuring more equitable distribution impact costs. More and more disposable and wasteful packaging enters the market every day because producers have no incentive to design smarter, less wasteful packaging. For these reasons, I urge you to support Michigan’s municipal recycling programs by passing the Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging law.

Sincerely,